

Inspection report for North Ormesby Children's Centre

Local authority	Middlesbrough
Inspection number	365823
Inspection dates	9-10 March 2011
Reporting inspector	Judith Elderfield

Centre governance	Local Authority
Centre leader	Rosie Evison
Date of previous inspection	Not previously Inspected
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Linked school if applicable	Not applicable
Linked early years and childcare, if applicable	EY308177 Dimples Riverside Day Care Ltd

The inspection of this Sure Start Children's Centre was carried out under Part 3A of the Childcare Act 2006 as inserted by section 199 of the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009.

Introduction

The inspection addresses the centre's contribution to:

- facilitating access to early childhood services by parents, prospective parents and young children
- maximising the benefit of those services to parents, prospective parents and young children
- improving the well-being of young children.

The report is made to the local authority and a copy is sent to the children's centre. The local authority may send the report to such persons it considers appropriate and must arrange for an action plan to be produced in relation to the findings in this report.

An inspection of the day care was carried out at the same time as the inspection of the centre under Section 3 of the Childcare Act 2006. The report of this inspection is available on our website www.ofsted.gov.uk.

This inspection was carried out by one additional inspector and an early years inspector.

The inspectors held meetings with senior managers from the centre and representatives from parents and carers, volunteers and the local authority. They also met a number of professionals, including representatives from health, education, family and community involvement workers. They observed the centre's work, and looked at: a range of relevant documentation, including key policies and safeguarding procedures; partnerships to meet the needs of the users; the effectiveness of the local authority support; challenge for the centre; and the impact of leadership and management on provision and outcomes for users.

Information about the centre

The North Ormesby Children's Centre is located in an urban area of Middlesbrough, which has a high crime rate with anti-social behaviour and substance misuse at the forefront of local residents' concerns. The area is currently undergoing a regeneration programme. Refugees and asylum seekers are being located in the area in increasing numbers. However, these groups are of a transient nature and no current data is available. The children's centre is co-located with Dimples Riverside Day Nursery, one of four in the east of Middlesbrough and operates with one cluster manager, a centre manager and team and one children's centre management board. The children's centre was developed from a Neighbourhood Nursery and provides the full core offer.

North Ormesby Children's Centre was designated as a phase one centre. The reach population of the centre is 514 children aged nought to five years and the centre has

registered 85% of this number. A high proportion of children live in workless households that rely on benefits as the main source of income.

The majority of local families are of White British heritage. Children enter early years education with knowledge and skills below expectations for their age. The proportion of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational needs, is 1.2%. Some activities are run from the North Ormesby Pavilion site and the local library.

The local authority provides governance for the centre.

Inspection judgements

Grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Overall effectiveness

The effectiveness of the children's centre in meeting the needs of and improving outcomes for users and the wider community

2

Capacity for sustained improvement

The centre's capacity for sustained improvement, including the quality of its leadership and management

2

Main findings

North Ormesby Children's Centre meets the needs of users well overall. Care, guidance and support are good in this welcoming centre which has created a whole-community approach to supporting every aspect of family well-being. A group of parents interviewed, all agreed they could talk to the staff about any of their problems and staff would listen and be supportive. The coordination of a range of guidance and support is good and users say that the services provided are having a positive impact on their lives. As a result, the well-being for many families is improving. Early Years Foundation Stage provision ranges from good to satisfactory in the immediate area. Some improvement in children's personal social and emotional development and communication, language and literacy skills can be seen in data provided. However, children's levels of development at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage are below those expected for their age.

Effective collaborative working operates between partners and the four children's centres in the cluster. Resources, such as staff, are shared across the children's centres. The inclusion of all children and their families is effectively planned for. Activities and training are coordinated well to ensure a sustainable programme. As such, users are able to access services across the locality. Working in partnership with the Adult Education Service, the centre signposts parents to courses. A focus on dental health and healthy eating has been a success, along with the centre's

allotment. Families use the area for outdoor activities, such as kite flying and looking for wild life in the winter and growing vegetables with the 'little diggers' programme through the summer months.

Procedures and protocols for safeguarding are good and regularly reviewed. All staff are well trained and continuously update their knowledge to ensure they have the most current guidance. Consequently, staff effectively ensure the ongoing safety and well-being of children and their families. Users, including parents and carers and children, feel very safe at the centre. The senior management team, together with staff and partners, have developed a clear and focused vision to make a real difference to the community, based securely on their wants and needs. The whole family is at the heart of what everyone is doing and this is evidenced in the range of activities that families, and increasingly the most vulnerable, can access. The local authority is aware of the limitations of the data it has access to. In addition, much of the data collected represents Middlesbrough area as a whole and is not broken down for each centre. A new E-start system, with which all staff are familiar, provides vital information when developing new programmes or evaluating existing ones. Whilst these systems are now embedded, the centre's ability to fully evaluate the longer term impact of their work is still developing. However, the centre has identified where further improvements can be made by using collected data more astutely. Attendance at the parent network group is improving and there is one parent on the advisory board. Parents and carers interviewed were not aware of how they could contribute to the management of the centre. The centre is aware of this issue and is in a good position to build on successes in the future and further improve outcomes for families and children.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

Recommendations for further improvement

- Increase parent representation on the advisory board to ensure that they are empowered to contribute to the governance of the centre.
- Develop further the use of available data at strategic and centre level to further enhance the delivery of services in order to improve outcomes for families.

How good are outcomes for users?

2

Good procedures ensure children are well-safeguarded. All parents and carers say they feel safe in the centre and have confidence that if they had concerns they could come to the centre to discuss these concerns as they trust the staff. Partnership working with health visitors, community police officers and street wardens is helping to successfully raise children's and families' awareness of safety in the home and in their communities. Good multi-agency support to families referred to the centre in times of acute crisis is helping to minimise the number of children entering care or moving onto the child-protection register.

A number of parents and carers spoken to, including young mums, commented on how their confidence as parents has improved, as a result of their participation in a number of activities offered by the centre. Baby massage sessions are very popular and parents report their babies sleep much better now. These sessions provide opportunities for mums to share concerns and tips about dealing with issues, such as feeding or sleep patterns. One young mum said 'the centre has been a lifesaver.' Most parents and carers feel that they have a voice within the centre, and that services provided meet their specific needs. A specific training programme was developed by the centre. The aim of the training was to provide parents and carers with the confidence to support their children's centre and understand how they could influence the services delivered. However, to date only one parent has attended one meeting. The centre understands that more needs to be done, before parents and carers can be meaningfully involved in the governance of the centre and to participate in key decision making at this level.

There is some good evidence of how the centre has helped parents and carers in to learning, training and employment. The centre has also established a close working partnership with the Adult Education Service that offers many courses across the locality, for example, literacy and numeracy, volunteers programme and English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) sessions are well attended. The children's centre runs a nurturing programme, which helps to build positive relationships and can be accessed at home or in the centre as a group where crèche facilities are available. Parents and carers report that these courses have changed lives for the better.

These are the grades for the outcomes for users

The extent to which children, including those from vulnerable groups, are physically, mentally and emotionally healthy and families have healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which children are safe and protected, their welfare concerns are identified and appropriate steps taken to address them	2
The extent to which all users enjoy and achieve educationally and in their personal and social development	2
The extent to which children engage in positive behaviour and develop positive relationships and users contribute to decision-making and governance of the centre	3
The extent to which children are developing skills for the future and parents are developing economic stability and independence including access to training	2

How good is the provision?

2

The centre meets the core offer well. It is valued by the community and users say they find the centre extremely approachable. All provision is of good quality and contributes effectively to improving outcomes for children, parents and carers and all users of the centre. Staff get to know families well and assess their individual needs.

Effective partnership working with child and health services ensures that assessment is strong and families benefit from the range of activities on offer. Assessment of individual cases is thorough and the common assessment framework is successfully ensuring teams can be gathered quickly to support children and families identified as being in need.

Parents report that the care and support is good and that staff always 'go the extra mile'. Staff ensure that support is provided for as long as needed. The well-planned activities for babies and toddlers ensure children are well cared for while receiving stimulation and the opportunity to explore their environment. Baby clinics, weaning advice and baby massage are well attended and provide good guidance and support for parents and carers.

Learning, development and enjoyment are promoted well. Good and developing partnership working with childcare providers and the school is ensuring that aspirations are raised. The quality of the day care and Early Years Foundation Stage provision is good with some outstanding features. The level of individual care provided by staff is good and because of their commitment families are succeeding in achieving positive lifestyles. The centre provides a daily update of job vacancies. These are displayed in the welcoming reception area and staff are always available to help download application forms and offer support in completing them. In addition, the partnership with the School Gates Project, whose mission is to increase the amount of employment and enterprise with parents and carers in local schools, is having a positive impact. This service has proved successful in signposting parents and carers to training and where necessary providing transport or bus passes to training venues.

Teenage pregnancies in this area are double that of the national average. The children's centre and partners are working in partnership with the local secondary school to promote sexual health and information about contraception; it is currently too early to see the impact of this work. The centre has a signposting service to local smoking cessation groups, which have had a 40% success rate over the last two years.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The effectiveness of the assessment of the needs of children, parents and other users	2
The extent to which the centre promotes purposeful learning, development and enjoyment for all users	2
The extent to which the range of services, activities and opportunities meet the needs of users and the wider community	2
The quality of care, guidance and support offered to users within the centre and the wider community	2

How effective are the leadership and management?

2

Governance, lines of accountability, professional supervision and day-to-day management arrangements are clear and understood. As a result, multi-agency working and performance management are effective. However, the inclusion of parents on the advisory board has been slow getting off the ground. The cluster manager and centre manager continually strive for the centre to offer the best service possible. This ambition is shared by all the staff who work together exceptionally well. Good lines of communication exist and morale is high across the centre. Much has already been done to analyse local needs and staff are not complacent about the ongoing need to target the hard to reach. The successful involvement of fathers and male carers in the centres activities is testament to how hard the centre has worked on the inclusion of all, in its activities. The inclusion of all children and their families is central to the centre's vision.

Self-evaluation is accurate and guides improvement across the centre. Development plans show some rigour in evaluating the work of the centre. However, data and information from the local authority is mostly town based, and the centre struggles to acquire centre specific data. Consequently, while priorities for development are realistic, challenging targets are not measurable or sufficiently specific to this centre. The centre is aware of the problem, and is working diligently to rectify this by using new systems recently put in place.

All procedures and policies to promote safeguarding are securely in place, including Criminal Record Bureau checks and safe recruitment practices. All staff are well trained in safeguarding and all training is fully up-to-date. Partner and commissioned services are required to meet the centre's own high standards. All agencies are well aware of the wider safeguarding agenda and collaborate effectively to reduce the risk of harm to children. The centre has completed appropriate risk assessments to ensure the safety of children and their parents and carers.

Centre accommodation is bright, and well cared for, welcoming and used highly efficiently. Sharing of resources and staff across the cluster ensures good value for money. The centre routinely seeks the views of parents, carers and children. This can be done through parent satisfaction surveys, verbally to a member of staff or anonymously in the parent's comment box. The centre is well placed to continue its improvement

These are the grades for leadership and management

The extent to which governance, accountability, professional supervision and day to day management arrangements are clear and understood	2
The extent to which ambitious targets drive improvement, provision is	3

integrated and there are high expectations for users and the wider community	
The extent to which resources are used and managed efficiently and effectively to meet the needs of users and the wider community	2
The extent to which equality is promoted and diversity celebrated, illegal or unlawful discrimination is tackled and the centre fulfils its statutory duties	2
The effectiveness of the centre's policy, procedures and work with key agencies in safeguarding children and, where applicable, vulnerable adults	2
The extent to which evaluation is used to shape and improve services and activities	2
The extent to which partnerships with other agencies ensure the integrated delivery of the range of services the centre has been commissioned to provide	2
The extent to which the centre supports and encourages the wider community to engage with services and uses their views to develop the range of provision	3

Any other information used to inform the judgements made during this inspection

The Dimples Riverside Day Nursery was inspected at the same time as the children's centre.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from our website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like us to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

Summary for centre users

We inspected the North Ormesby Children's Centre on 9 and 10 March 2011. We judged the centre as good overall.

During our visit, we looked at the centre's plans and documents and talked with a number of you and the professionals who work with you. Many of you went out of your way to tell us how much you enjoy the activities provided through the centre. You told us staff are friendly, hard working and give excellent support. We agree with you. We found the centre to be welcoming to all families and alive with activity and children's happy laughter. The staff have a high level of expertise and offer good practical and emotional support to families who need it.

The centre does many things well. All the professionals from the different agencies work well together to make sure you receive the right advice and support. Families who are facing complex or difficult times receive good support. Staff provide good care, guidance and support for all centre users. Their highly inclusive approach means that families from different parts of the community are all welcome. The centre makes a good contribution to improving families' health and children's educational achievement.

You told us you feel safe at the centre. This reflects the good work the centre does to promote safety and welfare and the good safeguarding arrangements. Children are well behaved and confidently explore their learning environment. You play an important part too. We were very impressed by the positive and supportive relationships you have with one another and with your children.

The cluster manager and centre manager provide effective leadership. They are well supported by the local authority and advisory board. All staff have ambitions for everyone in the community. They all work with great enthusiasm. They have a good understanding of your needs and are constantly striving to improve the quality of provision.

There are two things we have asked the leadership team to work on in the immediate future.

- Develop further the use of available data at strategic and centre level to further enhance the delivery of services in order to improve outcomes for families.
- Increase participation to ensure that parents and carers are empowered to contribute to the governance of the centre through meaningful representation on the advisory board.

Thank you very much for your welcome and openness with inspectors. We thoroughly enjoyed talking with you. We wish you every success in the future.

The full report is available from your centre or on our website www.ofsted.gov.uk.